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the text itself was published and commented on almost two centuries ago by Fabricius.⁶ A much abridged version of the form of the story as it appears in the *Speculum* is found in the fifteenth century English translation of the *Alphabetum narrationum*.⁷ If the Latin original of this collection is to be attributed to a certain Arnold, who made his compilation in the early years of the fourteenth century,⁸ it is chronologically possible that he made use of the work of Vincent, written between 1244 and 1254.⁹ But as the great encyclopedist is not cited in the course of a work, which makes a rule of naming its sources, it is more probable that the compiler made use of the same abridgement as Vincent, who in this case, was not responsible for the omission of details in the version of the *Speculum*. An examination of the different manuscripts would probably show their distribution into two classes, of which one would contain the full text represented by the English verse translation, and the other the abridged text used in the two continental Latin compilations.

GEORGE L. HAMILTON.

Cornell University.

THE CRITICAL EDITION OF CHARLES SEALSFIELD'S WORKS.

EDITOR JOURNAL OF ENGLISH AND GERMANIC PHILOLOGY,

SIR:

Will you grant me the privilege of explaining through your valued journal the present situation with regard to the promised historical and critical edition of the works of Charles Sealsfield, a situation which for a considerable time now has been for me the cause of much embarrassment and anxiety.

In the spring of 1907, the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen*, upon the initiative of Professor Jacob Minor of Vienna, resolved to publish, in seventeen volumes of the *Bibliothek deutscher Schriftsteller aus Böhmen*, a standard edition of the complete works of the great German-American novelist. Professor August Sauer, on behalf of the Society, entrusted me with the editorship-in-chief of that portion of the *Bibliothek*, and I was authorized to select among American scholars the requisite number of collaborators.

As is well known to those interested in the subject, no small amount of work has already been performed in the service of the enterprise.

⁶ *Codex pseudepigraphus veteris Testamenti*, Hamburgi 1723, I. 775-784; II, 85.

⁷ *An Alphabet of Tales*, ed. M. M. Banks, 61-4.

⁸ J. A. Herbert, *Library*, N. S. VI, 99-101; *Catalogue of Romances*, III, 423-430; P. Toldo, *Herrigs Archiv*, CXVII, 68-9.

⁹ *Hist. litt. de la France*, XVIII, 456.

Yet while numerous articles have been published in the periodicals, no part of the edition itself, to the very great disappointment of its promoters, has yet made its appearance. To a certain extent the slowness of our initial procedure will be readily understood and extenuated by persons in any degree familiar with the peculiar difficulties of my task. Hardly any great writer of the nineteenth century holds such bewildering riddles for the judgment of an editor as this reckless polyglot whose motley diction was an almost indissoluble mixture between pre-meditated imitation and his own linguistic confusion. A supervenient difficulty was encountered in the glaring textual discrepancies between the extant editions, doubly serious in the absence of manuscripts.

At last, in 1909, I was able to announce to Professor Sauer my readiness to send a volume of the *Lebensbilder* to the press. It had seemed best to check the progress on other volumes until that first installment had appeared, so that it might serve as a pattern for the make-up of the set and also furnish a textual canon and a key in questions of "office style" and many other cases of editorial dilemma. Then a quite unexpected hindrance to our plans arose out of the wretched political situation in the Austrian monarchy; or, to be precise, out of the crisis that had broken out in the Bohemian parliament. The eternal struggle between the German and the Czech elements culminated about that time in a complete paralysis of the activity of the *Landtag* when the German factions retorted upon the tyranny of the Slavic majority by the desperate measure of "Secession," i. e. concerted absenteeism. The Diet being thus without the possibility of a quorum, an extra-parliamentary government had to be instituted, under a constitutional provision.

The unfortunate connection between these great affairs of state and my humble literary venture requires an explanation. It consists simply in this: The *Gesellschaft zur Förderung* etc., like a number of other similar scientific societies, is the recipient of a subsidy from the public exchequer. The grant in its case had for a long series of years amounted to 42,000 crowns (about \$8,000) per annum. During the deadlock of the *Landtag*, under a temporary government by commission, the subsidies, for a variety of economic and political reasons, were discontinued. Through the withdrawal of its public stipend the Society fell at once into the utmost stringency, and some of its most important enterprises had to be suspended. The stagnation of our enterprise was at first regarded by Professor Sauer as being probably of but short duration. He wrote to me: (translated) "Our nearest concern is to get over this year (1910), since the crisis has overtaken us unexpectedly.... I cannot put aside, in favor of new work, those volumes of the *Bibliothek* already in course of printing. But so soon as these are disposed of, the Sealsfield edition will have precedence over everything else, and I shall not bring in anything that might interfere with its regular appearance. So I think that if you will kindly consent to

the unavoidable delay of the beginning, you need have no anxiety about the undertaking as a whole."

The current year, however, has witnessed no decided change for the better in Bohemian self-misgovernment; nor has there been any perceptible abatement of the financial distress by which all public and semi-public institutions and enterprises are crippled. In order to save its several activities from inanition, the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung* etc. has lately determined to swerve to what has always appeared as a characteristically American policy. Some of the work, notably the publication of the periodical *Deutsche Arbeit* and the propaganda for German art industry, is being carried on with private means. As concerns the Sealsfield edition, the suggestion is now advanced by Professor Sauer that the expenses involved in its publication might in part be raised in this country as one of whose foremost writers Charles Sealsfield is more and more being acknowledged. In a recent letter Professor Sauer concludes his argument as follows: (translated) "Even if the amount of the subsidy might possibly not be large, yet it would facilitate our enterprise, moreover we should be under a certain moral compulsion to put off, for the present, any other, not separately subsidized, piece of work.... Another way would be to find some American publisher who would be willing to join with us in the venture and to assume a share of the expense."

Despite the unforeseen and extremely serious obstacles by which our progress is for the time effectually blocked, Professor Sauer and myself are far from pessimistic about the fruition of the work in the near future. Even in the event of an appeal for financial succour proving futile we trust the edition will finally be brought out. Nor am I for my part ready to invoke American help without first ascertaining in some general way the presumable attitude of the profession. I need not say that any sign of moral support will be highly appreciated; but I shall be likewise grateful for any frank statement of reasons against the inauguration of a campaign for our cause. I also trust that the foregoing candid revelation of our troubles will exculpate me from a possible charge of procrastination, particularly in the eyes of those scholars who have generously promised their collaboration. Finally I must say that a relinquishment of the project, should it come to that pass, would entail a loss to the prestige of German-American, nay American letters (I am referring to the position of Charles Sealsfield as our most conspicuous international encomiast as well as our greatest novelist)—a loss of infinitely greater consequence than would be my own personal loss and mortification over a fruitless expenditure of years of energy.

Faithfully yours,

Washington University, Saint Louis.

OTTO HELLER.

December, 1911.